

Minutes of the Blue Ribbon Panel for Transportation Funding

Meeting #8

September 4, 2008

8:30 am-10:30 am

Department of Administration – Conference Room A

Members Present: Jerome Williams, Dept. of Administration, Co-Chair
Michael P. Lewis, RIDOT, Co-Chair
Lloyd Albert, AAA
Robert Cusack, Preferred Asset Management, LLC
John Gregory, Northern RI Chamber of Commerce
Gary Sasse, Dept. of Revenue
William Sequino, Town Manager, East Greenwich
John Simmons, RIPEC
Keith Stokes, Newport Chamber of Commerce
Peter Osborn, FHWA
Robert Weygand, URI

Staff: Robert Shawver, Diane Badorek, John Megrdochian, William Fazioli

In Attendance: Phillip Kydd, Marc Leonetti, Heidi Cote, Dana Alexander Nolfe, Bernard Frezza, Bruce Landis, John-Paul Verducci, Carmela Corte, Paul Dion, Christopher Long, Jennifer Harris, Henry Schwarzbach, Deborah Rosen, Abigail Anthony, Mark Therrien, Lillian Picchione, Katherine Trapani, Barry Schiller, John Flaherty, and Molly Clark.

August 21, 2008 Meeting Minutes

The minutes for the August 21, 2008 meeting were distributed.

Draft Public Outreach Presentation: Michael Lewis, RIDOT

Director Lewis reviewed the information being considered for inclusion in the public outreach presentations and requested input from the BRP members. He noted that the presentations will explain that the funding shortfall for transportation programs is a national issue and not unique to Rhode Island. It is important to include the steps that RIDOT has taken to improve efficiency and reduce costs, such as implementing best practices, value engineering and process improvements, early in the discussion. The focus of the presentations will include: how transportation is currently funded, the funding needed to restore the system to a condition of good repair, and potential funding options. The estimated cost to restore the system over the next ten years is \$639 million per year, while the anticipated funding resources are approximately \$354 million per year.

Discussion included the following comments:

- Note that the current gas tax distribution is mandated by statute;
- Point out the age of the infrastructure;
- Discuss reasons for lack of maintenance sooner in presentation: maintenance not eligible for federal funding so had to use state funds; RI's transportation program is primarily federally-funded; the state funded component of the program is much less (on a percentage basis) than that of other states;
- Emphasize how RIDOT has improved program efficiency to reduce costs;
- Try to include additional New England states on the funding source comparison chart;
- Present the potential funding options with examples of states that are using these options;
- Discuss what happens if nothing changes (impact on the public);
- Show ways the public can participate in the process: give feedback at public meetings, email comments to website, send in comments by mail;
- Presentations should be tailored to reflect concerns specific to the region of the state;
- Keep presentations to around 20 minutes in length;

--Director Lewis will make the presentations as the spokesperson for the BRP; Director Williams or another BRP member from the region will provide an introduction; presence of panel members is important to the process.

Dates for Public Outreach Meetings:

September 15 at CCRI - Lincoln

September 17 at CCRI - Newport

September 23 at URI - Kingston

September 25 at RIC – Joint meeting with Transportation Advisory Committee

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for October 2nd at 8:30 a.m. The agenda will include discussion of the input received from the public outreach regional meetings, continuing discussion of funding options and discussion on the final report.